

Program Summary

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

Victim Compensation and Assistance

Program Overview

The Victim Compensation and Victim Assistance Programs, funded by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC), provide monetary assistance and direct services to crime victims. These programs are operated by local government entities or private non-profit organizations while ACJC establishes program rules and monitors each program's compliance to the stated victim service-oriented objectives. The Attorney General's office also operates the Victims' Rights Program, which functions in a similar decentralized capacity but with a more significant focus on victim notification.

The Victim Compensation Program provides out-of-pocket compensation to crime victims for specific expenses incurred as a result of their victimization. Eligible reimbursements may include lost wages, medical, funeral, and counseling expenses with a maximum claim award of \$20,000. In Arizona, the 15 state county attorney's offices assume responsibility for distribution of victim funds provided to the county by ACJC. In order to receive monetary compensation, each victim must file a claim in the county attorney's office where the crime occurred. A victim's claim is investigated and reviewed by each county's volunteer Crime Victim Compensation Board. In FY 2005, the boards approved 1,309 claims with an average award of \$2,805. As seen in *Table 2*, of the claims submitted, approximately 73% are approved annually. Approval of these claims may also be dependent upon availability of funding resources at the time of the claim.

The Victim Assistance Program provides competitive grants to non-profit and government agencies that provide direct crime victim services. Services include crisis intervention, emergency shelter, information and referral services, and other victim support services. Receipt of grant monies for a Victim Assistance Program is determined through a competitive grant process conducted by ACJC. In order to monitor adherence to program policies, ACJC requires that grant recipients submit annual performance reports and quarterly financial reports. In FY 2006, 42 grants were awarded to 16 criminal justice agencies, including 14 county attorneys' offices, 1 police department, the Arizona Attorney General's Office, and 26 to non-profit organizations and other government-operated programs. Of the amount distributed, 99% were for salary and fringe benefits for providers of direct services to victims.

As a result of the Victim Assistance Program, organizations provided services to 27,850 victims in FY 2005. Of these victims, 30% received assistance for domestic violence, followed by assault victims at 14.5%. Of all services provided, notification services made up 29.5% and emergency temporary shelter was 19%.

Program Funding

Funding for both programs is mostly derived from the Victim Compensation and Assistance Fund (VCAF), which maintains a sub-account for each program. The Victim Compensation Program also receives federal monies from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). No State General Fund monies are provided for either victim program.

In FY 2007, the Victim Compensation Program receives total funding of \$3,804,000. Of this amount, the Victim Compensation and Assistance Fund provides \$2,500,000, which is comprised of monies from 3 sources: 4.6% of the Criminal Justice Enhancement Fund (CJEF) distribution, 10% of inmate work fees collected by the Department of Corrections, and unclaimed victim restitution. Court assessments, which are deposited into CJEF, provide almost two-thirds of this fund's revenue for the Victim Compensation Program. All of the fund monies are distributed to the county attorney's offices based on a base dollar amount and an annual commission approved formula, which is based on population. The Victim Compensation Program will also receive an estimated \$1.3 million in federal VOCA monies in FY 2007. The VOCA allocation matches state funding at 60%.

The Victim Assistance Program receives \$900,000 in FY 2007 from the Victim Compensation and Assistance Fund, which is its sole source of ACJC allocated monies. Monies for this program are generated by inmate community supervision fees and parole interstate compact fees. Like the Victim Compensation Program, this program disperses monies to county attorney's offices. As per A.R.S. § 41-2407, no more than 50% of victim assistance monies can be allocated to government agencies. In addition, ACJC rules state that a program can only qualify for victim assistance funding if they can provide a 25% match, as a new organization, or a 50% match, as an existing organization. In FY 2006, all awards were received by existing organizations.

The FY 2007 funding level for the Victim Compensation program has increased by 13.3% since FY 2001. This growth is attributed to a federal VOCA reimbursement rate increase from a 40% match to a 60% match. However, State Victim Compensation (VCAF) monies also declined due to a decrease in unclaimed victim restitution monies. FY 2007 funding for the Victim Assistance Program represents no change in state funding from FY 2001 levels. *Table 1* displays historical funding information for the Victim Compensation and Victim Assistance Programs by fund source, using data from FY 2001, FY 2005, FY 2006 and FY 2007.

Performance Measures

Table 2 includes performance measures for the Victim Compensation and Victim Assistance Programs. None of the measures listed in the General Appropriation Act directly address the success of these 2 programs, but rather measure the ability of ACJC to properly monitor recipients' compliance with program rules. Some of the measures listed are currently tracked by ACJC and others are measures recommended for future tracking.

Performance measures listed in *Table 2*, assess performance of both ACJC monitoring and program performance due to ACJC's decentralized role. One

of the most important outcomes is the victim satisfaction rating, which provides qualitative insight into the program's success by those who receive services. Other measures that may be useful to report include: 1) the annual number of victim claims submitted and the percent approved, which would establish the program's ability and effectiveness at targeting its key audience; 2) the number of program audits with no deficiencies, which establishes program adherence to ACJC rules and a program's ability to provide services and 3) the average per victim cost and the time required for victim compensation claim processing, which would assess efficiency. A maximum 7-week processing time is currently an ACJC program rule and ACJC has no case backlog. Many other states have backlogs of as many as 6 months.

One suggested performance measure not listed relates to tracking the percent of eligible victims that apply for Victim Compensation or Assistance. Due to some difficulty in tracking and attaining crime reports in local jurisdictions and the fact that many crimes are not reported, eligibility is difficult to determine.

Table 1				
Victim Compensation and Victim Assistance Funding History				
<u>Victim Compensation</u>	<u>FY 2001</u>	<u>FY 2005</u>	<u>FY 2006</u>	<u>FY 2007</u>
VCAF	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$2,500,000
VOCA	357,000	1,305,300	1,340,600	1,304,000
Total	\$3,357,000	\$3,357,000	\$4,340,600	\$3,804,000
<u>Victim Assistance</u>				
VCAF Total	\$900,000	\$900,000	\$900,000	\$900,000
Total	\$900,000	\$900,000	\$900,000	\$900,000

Table 2			
Victim Compensation and Victim Assistance Performance Measures			
<u>Victim Compensation Performance Measures</u>	<u>FY 2004 Actual</u>	<u>FY 2005 Actual</u>	<u>FY 2007 Estimate</u>
Victim satisfaction with provision of services	--	--	--
Amount of time required to complete claim processing	7 weeks	6 weeks	6 weeks
Number of victim claims submitted	1,779	1,794	1,900
Percent of victim compensation claims approved	77.2	73	79
<u>Victim Assistance Performance Measures</u>			
Victim satisfaction with provision of services by providers	--	--	--
Percent of program audits reflecting no deficiencies	100%	100%	100%
Number of victims receiving assistance	28,844	27,850	29,850
Average per victim cost of providing direct services	--	--	--